

THE BURLESQUERS ARE COMING TO TOWN

By DWIGHT S. PERRIN.



The Pony Who Works on the End.

sleeveless undershirts discussing a pasteboard container of cooling beer, smoking cigarettes (rolled from the sack) and idly flipping the leaves of their manuscripts. One was the second comedian, a German dialect foil for the author in a Weberfield dialogue that threads the show, and the other was a hapward brand of tramp.

It was very warm. Mrs. Buggs had a handkerchief tied about her throat to keep the rivulets of moisture from the starched yoke of her dress. The soubrette glanced coyly at the beer and fanned herself with a newspaper.

Out in the main room the chorus was being put through songs and dances in the rough. Musical comedy chorus girls rehearse in bloomers, burlesque girls in anything they can get. Their chief lack seems to be stockings. Some of them had pajama coats and short, puffed silk trunks, of gay colors such as acrobats wear. Such as wore skirts wore stockings; but these were few.

They were trying to sing "Hello, My Sweetheart, I Love You," but the owner-manager who directed the rehearsal wasn't pleased.

"Attack that song, girls," he ordered. "You know the words. You don't attack it, that's all's the matter."

Whereupon the girls did the best they could to attack it.

"I think I've got a pretty good bunch here," confided the owner. "There's only a few bums in the lot. I'm going to let three of 'em go. See that old girl with the red hair on the back row?"

The visitor looked and saw a motherly looking woman, apparently well along in the forties, whose flaming hair bespoke henna. She wore a flowered lawn dress and moved as though she were very tired.

PRIDE GOETH BEFORE A FALL IN THE BURLESQUE BUSINESS.

"I thought for a while she'd make up all right, but I guess not," continued the owner. "Her joints creak and she can't sing for a cent."

Silently the visitor felt sorry for the poor old lady.

"There's another one, over on the other end. She's got a good enough lookin' face, but she's too skinny to stand. You'd think some of these beauties'd wear symmetricals and hold their jobs, but it seems like they're proud of themselves the way they are."

The visitor felt sorry for the skinny lady.

"Look at them ponies, though. Seems to me like the ponies is getting better and more plenty every year. Look at that little girl in the pink pajamas. She's a good enough looker and a good enough singer and a good enough dancer to land in one of Zigfield's choruses at thirty a week, but she ain't got sense enough to go after the job. Honest, I wonder sometimes how I can hire some of these beauties for eighteen a week."

The visitor wondered how long it might be, if the pretty little pony stayed in burlesque, before she progressed to the back row to take the place of the red haired woman whose wrinkles defied subduing by grease paints.

"See that girl in the red bloomers and sweater? She's a circus girl—an acrobat—an' she's got a great act. She goes up on that trapeze you see there and does a disrobing act under the spotlight—takes her clothes off all the way down to a white union suit. Then she hangs by her teeth and kids people in the audience—anybody her eye happens to light on; you know the stuff."



THE PRINCIPALS AND THE DIRECTOR.
"You Had Ought to Attack it Harder."

There arose a mental picture of a girl hanging by her teeth and "kidding" through them.

"She told me the other day she hadn't worked for two weeks and the callouses was all wearing off her hands. She's gotta be careful of that, an' I told her so. You see, if her hands gets soft she's liable to fall off that bar any time, and that'll hurt, because she don't use a net. Her neck muscles is getting kind of tender, too, I guess."

Then, while the chorus sang, waved its arms, kicked and marched back and forth across the stage, the acrobat had herself hoisted to the bar and toughened her muscles by hanging by her teeth for five minutes.

"The girls don't wear much while they're rehearsing, do they?" ventured one of the visitors timidly.

"I should say they don't," exclaimed the manager. "Why, if this was an extra hot day or we was in a real hot hall like some of these shows is rehearsing in most of these girls would be working in their combinations. You know what those are, don't you? Well, that's the very one reason I hired this nice, airy hall. I think they work better when they got enough on to keep 'em from catching cold."

"Wait till you see 'em in their costumes, though. We got everything

"But do they ever get a real engagement?" asked the visitor.

"Oh, sometimes they do. Sometimes they catch a show that's hard up and get a few weeks on the road. Of course, they have to rehearse for nothing, but I guess they manage to eat."

Yet the inquirer wondered, if the truth were told, what tales there would be of privation until salaries began; how utterly exhausted some might be. It was amusing to watch the girls. Some of them skylarked. It was interesting to watch them. All of them were in earnest—deadly earnest.

Back in the anteroom there was hilarity. The well-known burlesque gags of years gone were being brought to light and the principals were laughing in sheer joy at hearing the good old things again. Schultz and Schneider were buying wine.

"The money, sir," suggested the French waiter, without which a burlesque is not a burlesque.

"Anybody can buy vine mit money. Ve buy it mitout," said Schultz.

"Very well, sir," said the waiter, bowing and disappearing. In a moment he returned with a bottle.

"Hey, where is de vine?" demanded Schneider, discovering that the bottle was empty.

"Anybody can drrink ze vein from ze full bottle," smiled the waiter. "You drrink it from ze empty von."

Here Schultz and Schneider took turns bending over to be kicked—by each other.

YOU SIMPLY CAN'T TEACH AN OLD THEATRICAL DOG NEW TRICKS.

There was a good old trick of tearing off a piece of a five dollar bill for change. Schultz and Schneider were deprived of their rolls by every approved burlesque method. A man evidently intended to be a Frenchman, who, when the show opens, probably will wear a high hat and carry a cane in the hand not occupied with twirling his mustachios, got Schultz's watch after somebody else had deprived Schneider of his. They fled the stage.

"Where are Millie and Pearl?" somebody demanded.

Business of bustling by Millie and Pearl, in the persons of the brunette soubrette and the blonde comedienne.

"Oh, they've caught on, as usual," the inquirer was informed, while Millie and Pearl hastened toward the theatrical r. u. e. to be on hand for their cues. "There's a couple of swell Americans here from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U. S. A. They've got 'em out for a time, I guess."

The chorus, i. f. t. m. b. t. v. v. b. a. c., expressed its astonishment at not finding Millie and Pearl with their victims in tow. Presently the victims entered.

"Hello, Schultz!" exclaimed Millie. "Don't you remember me?"

Schultz didn't.



They Rehearse In Whatever They Can Find.

"Don't you remember Herald Square?"

"Sure I do now," said Schultz. "Where is my diamond ring?"

Exit Millie and Pearl, laughing. In a Sunday school hall in the Forties the superintendent of the building exacted a promise that the name of the hall would not be revealed if the visitors were shown to the rehearsal room of another show.

"We only have these things once a year," he said, "and we don't want anybody to think we make a practice of it. No, we aren't ashamed of it. There's nothing to be ashamed of. But you know how some of these old fogies would kick if they found it out."

REHEARSING FIFTEEN CHORUS MAIDS IN THE ROARING FORTIES.

The callers were ushered without further ceremony into a long, narrow room on the first floor rear lighted by two dismal windows set ten feet above the floor. There was no ventilation. The usual principals in the usual undershirts sat about the sides of the room and in the centre of it fifteen chorus girls were being put through a song and dance by a negro. They wore less, if possible, than the Yorkville contingent.

The negro director had been engaged, the manager vouchsafed, to stage one number of the show, a ragtime dance and song he had written. They call him the negro musical comedy king because he once staged a production that Channing Pollock said would have amazed Paris, but which failed to make a ripple in New York.

"Keep this in your head. You've got this to learn. Don't think this is a joke," he repeated over and over. "You little girl in the front row there, put some swing into that step. This ain't—this isn't a funeral. You big girl in the back row, keep your heels together when you stop."

But the poor girl in the back row couldn't. From where the visitors sat it was easy to see why. Nature had made her knock-kneed.

One step led to another and a "connection" step to link them all together. A girl in the front row wavered and would have fallen had not the one next to her thrown a supporting arm about her. As she tumbled into a chair a waxen-faced individual with a cigarette hanging from his lower lip bent over her and patted her bare shoulder.

"Extra sirloin for two to-night, kid," he whispered. "I hit the boss for a couple bucks. Cheer up if you want hang on to this job. He's lookin' over here kinda queer now."

On the other side of the room sat the rara avis of burlesque—a stage mother. Under her wing was her daughter. The mother had accompanied the daughter to every rehearsal, one of the girls said. No, she could hardly be with her on the road. Dangerous? Not so very. The road isn't so much worse than Broadway, if you look at it right.

"She'll learn; she'll learn," observed the fledgling's experienced sister sagely. "They all learn."

And she went to the cooler in the corner of the room for a drink of ice water. There wasn't any beer at this rehearsal.

ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

By Alice Duer Miller

QUEENS AND GODDESSES.

Scene—Congress, during a woman suffrage debate. The Congressmen are, as usual, moving about, talking, reading, dozing, and one, an anti-suffragist, is speaking.

Congressman—I shall vote "No" on this measure, but I wish to say I take my stand for Woman's protection, for her own sake. No one honors Woman, no one respects her more, than I do; as queen and goddess I love and adore—

(Suddenly in an open space in front of the Speaker's desk appear Pallas, Athene and Cleopatra.)

Cleopatra—Strange little man without weapons, what can you mean?

Pallas—I, in my time, was a goddess—

Cleopatra—And I was a queen.

Pallas—Men knelt with gifts at my altar, gifts of ivory and gold, Bowls of bronze and of silver chased by the tools of old.

No council of chiefs was held, no treaty or war begun But they prayed to me for wisdom—

Cleopatra—And all that I wished was done.

Pallas—

My name was spoken with reverence, for the mortal's breath That jests on the name of a goddess calls soon for death. But here one spoke of his goddess, likening her to a hen. Think you Immortals suffer such words from the lips of men?

Cleopatra—

And one was talking of queens for many an hour. Till I longed to clap my hands with their old, old power And cry "Come hither, my guards, take this old man away. For his ignorant talk of queens, wearies your queen to-day."

Pallas—

If you have each a goddess, as all of you boast, Hurry and bring her here, here, where you need her most. She must be strong and wise; while ye, O mortals, are weak. Pray that she come and save you, from the foolish words you speak. If you have each a goddess—

Congressman, recovering from his astonishment—Yes, but home is her shrine.

Pallas—

Ah, I have seen those shrines, lovely,

many, as mine.

But women are toiling in them, toiling like slaves.

Are they your goddesses?

Congressman, confused—

Yes.

Cleopatra—

Surely the old man raves! I know the fate of captives and slaves of the East:

They must work till they die, or are sold like a beast. This man owns them by thousands.

They toil amid wheels that grind. They are his slaves.

Congressman, faintly—

No, queens.

Cleopatra, angrily—

The man is mad or blind.

Pallas—

Nay, nay, Daughter of Egypt, he is neither blind nor mad. But talking as men still talk when their cause is bad.

To cover an ugly truth he uses a pretty phrase As even the Gods have done in the good old days.

He knows that the woman who toils for some one else to be rich Is no more a queen than the man who digs a ditch.

He knows that the wife at home, whom he does, as he says, revere,

Is not a goddess, or else he would seek her counsel here.

He knows her merely a woman, and he wants no woman to share

His power—

Cleopatra—

Why does he not say so?

Pallas—

Because he does not dare.

Cleopatra—

Dares not? Is he a coward?

Pallas—

Nay, he fears where he ought.

For as some men think of women they are wise to hide their thought.

(She turns to Congressman.)

Mortal, I am a goddess. Do not tremble and shrink. I read your heart about women—all that you wish and think.

Base it is, and unworthy, but I strike you not dead at my feet. This is my sentence upon you—a punishment meet—

When you tell your thought of Woman, you shall tell the truth. How you despise her wholly—all but her beauty and youth.

Henceforth when you speak of Woman, you shall tell all your heart. Congressman, terrified—

I must be silent forever! (A pause.)

Pallas to Cleopatra—

Come, Queen, we may now depart.

THERE ARE NO SUFFRAGISTS IN BURLESQUE ART: ONLY SUFFRAGETTES.

Mrs. Octavius Buggs, as you must have guessed, is a suffragette—not a suffragist, mind you, but a suffragette. Also, as you may not have guessed, she belongs to the burlesque show the stubby man wrote and in which he plays the principal comedian's part.

There are seasons for hunting deer, seasons for trout fishing and seasons for paying income tax. This is the season of burlesque rehearsals. They are everywhere in New York, from the furthest reaches of Manhattan to the most un-get-at-able corners of Brooklyn—in "opera houses," in dance halls, in lecture rooms, in so-called lyceums. They are everywhere, for some odd reason, but in the theatres.

In an anteroom off the grand ballroom in an opera house in Yorkville Mrs. Buggs and her preceptor stood in the middle of the floor. On a divan along one wall sat three women—the show's soubrette, a pretty black-eyed, dark-skinned girl; the blonde comedienne and the "straight" woman. They regarded the two visitors impersonally. It was evident they weren't used to having strangers at rehearsals, but it was equally evident they weren't going to show it.

On the other side of the room was a group much less prepossessing—a woman, evidently the wife of one of the men, and two young men. The men had their coats off and their vests off and their shirts off and sat about a table in their